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## THE DARKEST MOMENT OF LIFE

**I**T WAS Professor William James of Harvard who once pointed out that of all the gloomy places the "present is the darkest moment of life." This seems to be true of the world just now. The reason for it lies primarily in the anarchy that reigns in the realm of our national aims. During the war our purpose was definite and clear-cut. We were a homogeneous people. We worked together for the performance of a big job. In peace that coherence has disappeared. It is impossible to picture the mind of America, for there is little unity of purpose among us. We are out on the sea without a rudder. In Mr. Taft's phrase, we are in a moral doldrums. There being no unity of effort, men seek their own satisfactions merely. These personally conducted satisfactions naturally come in conflict with other persons' satisfactions, in consequence of which evidences of unrest are everywhere, crimes of violence are increasing, and group antagonisms are rampant. The present is dark.

Is there before us any possibility of ordering the collective mind of American manhood? Can the attention of our people be riveted again upon something worth while, upon a program of peace which shall win the loyalties of us all, as did the program of war?

Such a concentration of purpose ought to be possible, and it ought to lie in the direction of a society of democratic nations organized to establish and to conserve the rights of free nations under law. It will yet lie there. At the present writing there seems to be little hope for the League proposed by the Paris Conference. Judging from the condition in the United States Senate, it seems to us that the Covenant of the League of Nations, as far as the United States is concerned, is to be "laid upon the table." The "reservations" now practically assured may and probably will, if the President's threat be carried out, have the same effect upon the proposed League of Nations that the Senate reservations of 1911 did upon Mr. Taft's treaties with France and Great Britain, namely, to nullify and to destroy. But an ordered world is now the conscious goal of men everywhere.

Yet if America is to participate effectively in the international concert devoted to the restraint of force and the establishment of the modes of peace, it is her first duty to become herself increasingly democratic. The class struggle of which the war was a natural consequence is on, and that with no little vigor in our free America. Its intensity shows that there are defects primarily in our industrial life, which must be remedied. While hunger and bankruptcy threaten, the thirst for special privilege debauches first one class and then another. With a four-billion-dollar deficit, and the cost of food, shelter, and clothing mounting, the condition is thought by many of our best observers to be a danger.

Our own view, however, is that our educated citizenry will yet prove competent to evolve out of the divergencies of views and interests not only a just and adequate system of taxation to the relief of our financial situation, a larger production and a more satisfactory system of distribution, but a finer democracy; for it is the history of American genius that at crises it throws over half-baked theories and temporizing compromises and lands firmly upon its feet.

The hope that we as a collective people shall do this now and get together again in a great united effort lies in the fact that the public conscience is directed once more toward a greater evaluation of the individual man. If, as may be the case, we are as ignorant, bloodthirsty, and superstitious as ever, any permanent change must begin with the individual; for the hope in any democracy depends upon a majority who see accurately, feel truly, and create substantially. To be enduring, any change for the better must be fundamental; and the most fundamental thing in any human society is the human being. All change for the better in social conditions since the time of Queen Elizabeth, when the common people were left by common consent to their illiteracy and ignorance, has followed the improvement of the individual man; not of the poor only, but of men at both ends of the social scale and all along the line. More intelligence is always the need, because ignorance in a democracy is more dangerous than badness. If we are to have this finer, educated democracy, we must look upon it as a process, a thing constantly to be discovered, a movement requiring all the brains we can muster. Democracy, more than any other form of political control, depends for its life upon the intelligence, accuracy, self-control, health, culture, honesty, public spirit, and independence of character of the average voter. Group interests are important, but they can be evaluated only in terms of the individual.

We do not here speak of leaders. Leadership we must have—leadership not of the richest nor of the strongest, but, as Mr. Galsworthy has recently pointed out, leadership of the "best in spirit." But we need not worry about leaders, if only the majority of our citizenship be sufficiently intelligent and right-minded. If the major portion of us have sense, our right leaders will be pushed to the top.

So it is of us common ones that we are speaking here. Our fundamental needs are very simple. We must eat, drink, and sleep. We must exercise and breathe pure air. We must walk with the beautiful, at least some; think of others a little, work kindness, and produce for the need of the world. We must love and nourish children. These are the things we must do with sanity and moderation, but do them we must. They are the simple and elemental facts of human life. If in the enjoyment of

them we can pay our bills and direct these activities rationally toward a richer social health and a deeper personal enjoyment as far as possible for all, we shall then be in the way of opening up those wider significances of what life means. If we can go about this business with a fair measure of unanimity, we shall then be in the way of democracy. It seems to us, therefore, that the program of the American people, and we do not here essay to speak for other nations, is now to bring our schools, churches, class organizations, and legislation to the task of dignifying the individual man—the body of him, the mind and spirit of him—in the interest of the whole.

This is a present and an ever enduring path along which America can move in her course toward that international service which she aims to render to the cause of international peace. When once we have agreed upon this, the darkness of the present will cease to give us concern.

## THE MENACE OF THE POLICE POWER

FOR generations, states, adopting methods of the wild animals of the jungle, have fashioned their policies according to the cunning of the saber-toothed tiger. For nearly five years, the major nations of the world have been exercising their teeth and claws, some unto their death, all unto their serious injury. Constitutional government for the time has been abolished.

But we are now emerging again from the jungle. The great war, if not technically ended, is practically over. The reign of martial law, especially in America, should now be less in evidence. Yet there are signs which point ominously to the contrary. The activities of our police in certain sections are more drastic, reprehensible, and dangerous than in the days of the "Writs of Assistance" of unsavory memory. Detectives operating in the Department of Justice—let us note the name of the department—are arresting private citizens without warrant, entering their homes, opening their private papers and other effects, putting them in jail and keeping them there for days, stating, defining and executing the law with less semblance of justice than in the darkest days of the Inquisition.

We do not refer to the activities of Mr. Archibald Stevenson, censor of patriotism, prosecutor of the Soviet Bureau, of the Rand school, and the like. We know of his activities only through the daily press. But we do know at first hand one Nowack, who was arrested, held in jail for a week, after which he was discharged with no evidence of guilt having been found against him. The only reason for his arrest was that his name appeared on a slip of paper from a newspaper found in the pocket of an old soldier, aged seventy-six, who had been arrested for some offense.

We do know of one Lewis Koerner, who was arrested without warrant, confined for days in jail, released under a writ of *habeas corpus*, the United States District Attorney confessing that he had found no reason for holding the prisoner. The result is that Koerner has lost his job, and, because of his experience, he has been discredited. In consequence of it all he has had to leave town to seek employment elsewhere.

We also know of the case of one Max Holder, whose story we have been able to obtain just as he has addressed it to the United States Attorney General, the Honorable Mitchell Palmer. Our readers will be pleased to know that the equity in this case is to be made public, for Holder has brought action in the courts against W. J. Flynn, chief of the Government detectives under the Department of Justice, and against his first assistant, Lawrence O'Dea. A prominent newspaper at the time of Holder's arrest stated that the officers had found in his room a scrapbook belonging to him and containing accounts of bomb outrages. Upon examination it is found that the scrapbook contains extracts from the writings of Dr. Frank Crane. The attorneys for the plaintiff have asked that the paper retract this article and apologize. Holder's letter to the Attorney General follows:

"I consider it my duty to my country, and to myself, to respectfully call your attention to the unspeakable wrongs perpetrated against me by Chief Flynn and his subordinates. I hope to be pardoned for a brief history of my life and activities in the last 12 years, since I came to the shores of this great land, so that you will be in a better position to judge my contentions.

"I was 21 years old when I came here, a fugitive from military service in Austria, of Roumanian parentage. The first five years I spent in New York city, together with my mother and sister. The former still lives there. I then yearned to know this country better, and my wanderlust took me through the large Eastern cities to Minneapolis, where I married. It was there that I took up the study of law, which I completed in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1918.

"My travels made it impossible for me to obtain citizenship before last year, when my technical status as an alien enemy prevented my obtaining it. I then took the only course open to me, and applied to your predecessor for special dispensation, a power granted to him by Congress, to become a citizen. I still have the reply to that letter in my possession. I was unsuccessful in this move, as I was unable to get even a form application from Mr. O'Brien, an assistant apparently in charge of these proceedings.

"I came to this city in January of this year to get a little rest from my studies, during which I supported my mother and family. I worked as a waiter during the time I studied, and am a member of the Waiters' Union, affiliated with the A. F. of L. In the month of March last I was called upon to manage the strike